

EXHIBIT

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## THE RURAL LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE

A CATALYST FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL INTEGRITY  
IN THE AMERICAN WEST

February 18, 2009

My name is Bill Bryan and I am the Executive Director of the Rural Landscape Institute, a nonprofit organization in Bozeman working to enhance the economic vitality of farms and ranches, thereby securing the health of the land, open space and sustainable rural communities.

This resolution is important to the people of Montana because our state is suffering from the consequences of an increasing rural-urban divide. Rural communities are wasting away from lack of economic viability in agricultural and other rural economic sectors, while urban communities are being threatened by the lack of security in their food sources. Our state's natural resources – the foundation of our successes in agriculture and tourism – are being threatened by encroaching urbanism and the inability of rural communities to steward them appropriately for lack of financial resources. And these are only a few examples of the problems facing our rural and urban communities – unless we work together to find solutions.

The Montana University System is the best catalyst and leader for this program because it has the resources, expertise, and geographic reach to successfully promote and implement this work. In addition, the University System already has several existing programs working on rural/urban issues that can leverage or encourage partnerships between rural and urban resources.

The sustainability of Montana – our ability to meet the needs of our state's residents now without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – is at stake here. We all want the same things – jobs, education, health, recreation, clean air, clean water, etc. We have no choice but to unite in common purpose to create these for every single person in our state, both rural and urban. This resolution will enable us to work together toward that common goal to ensure the future of our state.

Thank you.